

5009

February 23, 2010

Re: House Bill #5009

*An Act Concerning Wellness Programs and Expansion of Health Insurance Coverage*

Dear Chairmen Crisco and Fontana and the Members of the Joint Committee on Investment and Real Estate:

I am a hematologist and medical oncologist writing on behalf of the issue addressed by House Bill #5009. This bill requests required coverage for the cost of testing for bone marrow donation. At this time, testing for bone marrow donation is covered by the volunteer. Donation to the bone marrow registry is vital for the lives of many patients who would otherwise have incurable and terminal disease. Bone marrow transplantation replaces a patient's diseased marrow with healthy blood-forming cells from a volunteer donor. Bone marrow transplantation is potentially curative in a number of diseases including leukemia, lymphoma, multiple myeloma, aplastic anemia, inherited immunodeficiency, hemoglobinopathies, and inherited metabolic disorders.

However, there is a great need in increasing numbers of donors in the National Marrow Donor Program. Each patient who requires a transplant must have a suitable match. Unfortunately, at this time, over 70% of patients do not have a match. Therefore, more donors, especially those who are American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, or multiple-race, are needed.

I believe that passing House Bill #5009 will greatly improve the number of donors in the state of Connecticut by removing an obstacle in recruiting potential volunteers. With more potential donors, there is a greater chance for a patient to have a match for a life saving procedure.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter,

Sincerely,



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